

The Board extends a special thanks to:

- Our very capable professional consultants - Susan Carter of Places Associates, Inc. and Town Counsel, Jon Witten, of Huggins and Witten, LLC.
- Lower Village Sub-Committee - Chairman Don McPherson, Bruce Fletcher, Karen Kelleher, Barbara Sipler, Laura Spear, Russ Willis, Phil Moseley, Brian Martinson and Lori Clark.
- Light Pollution Sub-Committee - Chairman Russ Willis and Greg Troxel
- Pedestrian Walkway Planning Sub-Committee – Chairman Kristina Wile, Martha Monroe, Lori Clark, Joelle Spear, James Salvie and Associate Member Phyllis Fitzsimmons.

As can be seen by this report, the Board had another busy year, but this amount of work would never have been possible without the tireless and outstanding efforts of Karen Kelleher, and Kristen Domurad-Guichard, who not only work diligently for the Board, but also for other Town Boards and Committees and the general public with whom they interact on a daily basis.

Respectfully submitted,

Lori Clark, Chair  
Ernest E. Dodd, Vice Chair  
Leonard H. Golder  
Stephen Quinn  
Kathleen A. Willis  
Brian Martinson, Voting Associate  
Malcolm FitzPatrick, Associate

Donna M. Jacobs, Associate  
Martha Monroe, Associate  
  
Karen Kelleher, Planning Coordinator  
Kristen Domurad-Guichard, Administrative Assistant

## **CONSERVATION COMMISSION**

The Conservation Commission consists of seven members appointed by the Board of Selectmen to administer and enforce both the Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act and the Town of Stow Wetlands Protection Bylaw and associated regulations. Areas subject to protection under these regulations include wetlands, rivers, streams, other water bodies and their banks, and flood plains, among others. In addition to these resource areas, the Commission must review and, if appropriate, stipulate conditions under which proposed activities within 100 feet of the resource or 200 feet of ponds and streams must be conducted. The Commission also works to manage over 1,200 acres of conservation land throughout the community and a network of trails on these lands, and to protect additional high-priority lands. Trail maps and permit applications are available in the Conservation Commission office, which is located in the Town Building.

Currently, the Commission consists of seven members with varied backgrounds and a common interest in environmental issues. In addition, we have the strong support of several associate members who work on special projects, such as wetland delineation, drainage issues, trail mapping, forestry management, community gardens and open space planning. Additional

support comes from our full-time Conservation Coordinator, part-time Secretary and part-time Conservation Land Steward.

### **Conservation Land Updates**

**Land Maintenance:** Permits were issued for guided walks and educational activities scheduled at several of our conservation properties. The walks are sponsored by the Stow Conservation Trust and serve to familiarize participants with the trails and natural resources unique to the area.

There were numerous instances of trees and limbs down on the trails after storms and high winds during the summer and the notorious October snowstorm. Due to the nature and extent of the damage each property was assessed, imminent hazards and impassable trails were the first priority. General trail clearing and cleanup followed and is still underway. Abutter concerns regarding hazardous trees and invasive species were addressed and will be monitored in the future. Seasonal mowing of trail entrances improved parking and trail access, and helped to contain invasive species. The meadow located on the Woodhead parcel of Flag Hill is mowed annually to enhance the habitat for Eastern Bluebirds and other open meadow species.

It is a matter of concern that individuals are taking it upon themselves to cut trees with chainsaws and others have cut and marked their own trails on public/town land. Although perhaps well intentioned, any activity that alters the land must be conducted in conformance with current policy, liability insurance requirements and approved by this office.

You can help preserve the beauty of our lands by reporting acts of vandalism, regulation violations, downed limbs or trees, and any other potential hazards or concerns to the Conservation Commission at 978-897-8615. Thank you in advance for your help and cooperation.

**Community Gardens:** The community garden has grown every year since it started and this year there were eighty-seven plots available. Rental fees remained the same. Due to impending and then recovery from knee replacement surgery, the steward enlisted the help of the gardeners to be her eyes and ears at the garden and to greet new gardeners, help them locate their plots, and answer any questions they might have.

The annual field was plowed and harrowed in the spring and with help from four of the gardeners, fifty-seven plots were measured and staked. The perennial field had four new 30' x 50' plots plowed, bringing the total plots available to thirty. Another pitcher pump well was added at the back of the field and landscaping fabric and wood chips were put down to prevent unwanted growth of vegetation and additional wood chips were added around the existing pumps.

If interested in a community garden plot, please call the Conservation Commission office at 978-897-8615 for an application. Plots are assigned on a first come, first serve basis and all returning gardeners are assigned their same plot.

### **Public Hearings**

Hearings for residential construction, wetland delineations/resources and restoration projects as a result of enforcement action continued at a brisk pace, including Harvard Acres well permits, Lake Boon Drawdown and Herbicide Treatments for weed management, review of plans for the Center School Project, a subdivision off West Acton Road, and several small applications for home improvements and septic repair. Commission members continued their participation in several town-wide planning projects, including Center/Hale School expansion, Open Space Committee and Community Preservation Committee.

The Commission held 35 public hearings for projects during the year. A total of \$4,067 was generated for the Town by these hearings and applications. License Agreements, Community Garden fees, Regulations for Wetland Protection Bylaw, Trail Guides, copy fees and donations also generated \$1,875.

### **Cooperative Efforts and Long Range Planning**

Work plan priorities for the coming year include but are not limited to revisions to the Wetland Protection Regulations, baseline monitoring for conservation restrictions, vernal pool education and invasive species identification. The Commission also works collaboratively with local conservation organizations including the Stow Conservation Trust and Sudbury Valley Trustees on both land protection and land management issues.

The Conservation Commission has assisted the Stow Conservation Trust in drafting a conservation restriction for the open space parcel of the Derby Woods subdivision off Harvard Road, the Taylor Road subdivision and for the Corzine Woodlands. Once approved and accepted by the Board of Selectmen and the Secretary of Environmental Affairs, the Conservation Commission will accept title of the open space at Derby Woods. The Commission is also still involved in working with the Board of Selectmen to advance an effort to place a water supply well on a conservation land parcel off Deerfield Lane and assisting with securing the necessary approvals to allow this to happen.

### **Administration**

Kathy Sferra is the Commission's liaison to the Community Preservation Committee, and Open Space Committee.

In 2009 the Selectmen appointed Ingeborg Hegemann Clark and Rebecca Mattison as Stow's representatives on the Study Coordination Team for the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers Assabet River Sediment and Dam Removal Feasibility Study, and assisted in submitting comments to the Army Corps on behalf of the Town.

Bruce Trefry is the Commission's Land Steward and the Parcel Steward for Flagg Hill Conservation Area and Heath Hen Meadow Brook Woodland. Bruce provides overall management of the town's conservation lands and does an outstanding job for the Commission.

Joyce Bunce is the Steward for the community gardens at the Captain Sargent Conservation Area on Tuttle Lane. She is also a member of the Stow Garden Club. Joyce has done a wonderful job coordinating participants, laying out plots, educating the gardeners on organic farming and providing fresh vegetables to the Stow Food Pantry.

Maureen Trunfio is the part-time secretary assisting with daily operations of the Conservation Commission office and attends to the Commission's needs when called upon. Maureen is in the process of getting her certification in Fundamentals for Conservation Commissioners from MACC.

Pat Perry's consistent management of daily operations is outstanding. We all thank Pat for her efforts. Thanks to her hard work, the Commission has maintained and improved its high standard of professionalism in its interactions with town residents, other town boards and commissions, and state regulatory and enforcement bodies. As we add more conservation land to that already under management by the Commission, and as development activity in Stow continues at a steady pace, it becomes more and more important to coordinate the activities of the Commission with other town boards and effectively maintain required documentation. Pat continues to do an outstanding job in her role of coordinating daily operations and the successes of the Conservation Commission are due in large part to her dedication and effort.

The Commission benefits from working with town departments, land trusts, associate members and the community. Your input and assistance are invaluable to the Commission. **THANK YOU!**

If you have an interest, expertise or experience in conservation or environmental protection and would like to be a member, an associate member or volunteer, please call the office at 897-8615 or attend a meeting. Meetings are generally held on the first and third Tuesday of every month.

Respectfully submitted,

Helen Castles, Vice Chair  
Ingeborg Hegemann Clark  
David Coppes  
Rebecca Mattison, Chair  
Douglas Moffat  
Kathy Sferra

Joyce Bunce, Associate  
Stewart Dalzell, Associate  
Dwight Sipler, Associate  
Bruce Trefry, Associate  
  
Patricia Perry, Coordinator  
Maureen Trunfio, Secretary

## **BOARD OF HEALTH**

As the local permitting authority responsible for the health and safety of Stow residents, the Board of Health continues its service to the Town by insuring that our water, sanitation, habitation, and environment continue to meet the high standards set by those early pioneers who recognized that good health practices create positive outcomes for people and the environment.